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SPEECH

OF

HON. CHARLES SITGREAVES,

OF NEW JERSEY,

ON

RADICALISM AND RECONSTRUCTION;

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 1866.

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## RADICALISM AND RECONSTRUCTION.

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Mr. SITGREAVES. Mr. Speaker, from the hour that the guns of Fort Sumter inaugurated "the great rebellion," through the alternate defeat and success of our arms on a hundred battle-fields, when the capital was beleaguered by hostile armies, and, in the apprehension of many patriots, the sun of our national existence was about to set in darkness forever, I never doubted for a moment the final triumph of the Union. I saw the freemen of the North united as one man in a firm resolve to maintain the compacts of the Constitution. I heard the declarations of the press that the Union must remain one and indivisible forever. I heard the representatives of the people in Congress declare by solemn resolution—

"That this war is not waged on our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired."

I saw the Democrat and Republican, the farmer and mechanic, the professional man and the laborer, gather from every hill and valley of the North and march side by side to the rescue of the imperiled Republic, bearing "the old flag," determined that not a star should be torn from that glorious symbol of the Union, and resolved to maintain its entirety or to die in its defense; but above all I felt that the God of Washington smiled upon our cause, and that

the same holy fire of 1776 which He implanted in the bosoms of our fathers still glowed in the hearts of their sons. Such were my feelings through that long and bloody war and up to the time that I took my seat on the floor of this House. Imagine, then, Mr. Speaker, my feelings of astonishment and sorrow when I heard the majority of this House, and members on this floor, professing to represent the people, declare that the Union was not restored, and never should be unless upon conditions so degrading as could be adopted only by a people whose servile necks were fitted for the yoke of despotic power. Sir, when I heard members talk of reconstruction instead of restoration; when I see week after week during this long session amendment after amendment proposed to the Constitution; when I see the most important constitutional questions affecting the rights of the States and the dearest interests of the people passed with less discussion than an ordinary measure of finance at a town meeting, or an alteration of the rules of a debating club; when I see the influence of radical ideas among the people, I would tremble for my country and despair of the perpetuity of the Republic had I not an abiding faith in the wisdom, justice, and mercy of the God of our fathers.

Mr. Speaker, why is this? Why is it, when from the outset of the rebellion our whole people have declared with one voice that no State

could or should put itself out of the Union, either by peaceable secession or force of arms? Why is it that when to maintain this declaration our soldier-sons have poured out their blood as no soldiers have ever poured out their blood in the history of nations? Why is it that when the people of the insurgent States, defeated in the trial by battle to which they appealed, yield up their theories of secession and ask to take their old place under the flag of the Union? Why is it that when that incorruptible patriot, Andrew Johnson, wielding the executive power of the Government, declares that the rebellion has ended, resistance to constitutional authority ceased, and recommends the immediate admission of their representatives that we may be once more a united people, with one Constitution, one interest, one destiny, that this Congress says "No?"

Let us examine some of the principal reasons alleged for this strange, unnatural response.

1. We are told that "they have committed treason; that they still nourish the heresy of secession in their hearts, and therefore they cannot be intrusted with the ballot, for the ballot in their hands would be used to destroy the Constitution and the Union."

Mr. Speaker, this objection states two facts or truisms with which I most cordially agree: first, that the South has committed treason; and second, that heterodox ideas are dangerous. Sir, ideas are everything in a republic. Ideas make and repeal laws and constitutions. Ideas make wars, rebellions, and revolutions, both in Church and State, and every true patriot and Christian will denounce heterodox ideas as the foes of God and man. The idea of sectionalism promulgated by radicals North and South for different reasons, but to effect the same result, has been the curse of this Republic; for thirty years the accursed idea of secession, the daughter of sectionalism, was promulgated by the southern radical until it grew strong enough to bathe the land with fraternal blood.

For thirty years sectional ideas, in consequence of slavery, sustained by British emissaries and British gold, have been promulgated by the northern radical until it culminated in the same bloody result. The fires of secession in the South have been quenched in that blood. The fires of sectionalism in the North are still fanned by the northern radical in hate, and fed by the fuel of vengeance in the vain hope that he may succeed in kindling a flame which may destroy the Constitution and Union of our fathers. The ideas now so dangerous to the constitutional rights of the States, to personal liberty, and the perpetuity of the Republic is northern radicalism. Let radicalism control the ballot and obtain a permanent lease of political power, and republicanism will be an empty name.

Mr. Speaker, in my discussion of this subject I shall use radicalism and fanaticism as convertible terms. The radical is always fanatic and the fanatic is always radical. I also beg leave to state that my remarks on radicals and radicalism are not intended to apply to any member of this House. I have expressed similar views long before this Congress was elected.

Mr. Speaker, there is no man on this floor detests treason and traitors more than I do, but I do not limit my detestation to southern treason and southern traitors. While I denounce the doctrine of secession taught in the South as leading to treason, I denounce the doctrine of the northern radical as equally damnable and leading to treason, rebellion, or revolution.

I cannot see the justice of denouncing southern traitors and loading northern traitors with honors. I never could see why assemblages of "Union men and women" should greet with applause the orator who declared that "for twenty years he had tried to destroy the Union of the States and gloried in the fact," while at the same time they applauded the most bitter denunciations of southern traitors. Sir, I am for meting out equal and impartial justice to *all* traitors. The southern traitor declares his

repentance, the northern traitor never has. The late unnatural war was brought about by radical fanatics, and every intelligent man knows it. The southern radical and the northern radical both aim for a dissolution of the Union, and both aided each other with fuel to fire up the hearts of the people. The northern radical taught the people of the North to hate the people of the South with a moral and political hatred, the southern radical taught the people of the South to hate the people of the North with a moral and political hatred; and this teaching produced its legitimate results.

Sir, the testimony of all history and our own knowledge alike teach us that radical fanaticism should be dreaded as the arch enemy of God and man, but most especially to be dreaded in a republican Government where the press and speech are free. Radicalism is the same in every age, in every clime, and in every human heart. It is a master passion, beneath its sway every principle of humanity, every finer feeling of the heart are burned and destroyed as the flowers of the earth are destroyed beneath the burning lava of a volcano. Let us look at the page of history for the portrait of radical fanaticism; we shall find it identical on every subject. Look at the persecutions by the Roman Emperors against those who denied the divinity of Jupiter, refused to bow at his shrine, or to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods; for this, thousands of men and women were tortured with the most cruel tortures, were sewed in the skins of wild beasts and torn to pieces by blood-hounds, were crucified, were covered with wax and set on fire to light the imperial gardens of the palace.

Look at the history of Mahomedanism; imbued with the fanaticism of their chief, the Mahomedan proclaimed death to the infidel; he marched to exterminate the world or convert it to the creed of his prophet, and his path was marked by tears and blood and millions of human skulls.

Look at the history of Jesus, He who went about doing only good. Religious radicalism

cried out not to release him, but Barrabas; radicalism nailed him to the cross and gloated over his dying agonies. Look at the persecution of God's ancient chosen people, the Jews, by the Christian radical; in every nation for ages persecuted, robbed, tortured, put to death in the name of Him who taught "love your enemies." Look at the old French Revolution; in the sacred name of liberty Frenchmen were turned into human tigers thirsting for human blood. France was filled with spies, informers, and provost marshals; men were murdered by tens of thousands; blood and carnage rioted throughout the whole land; the rivers became putrid with human carcasses, and the streets of Paris were flooded with human blood. Religion, life, liberty, were all sacrificed by these radical monsters, and France became an earthly hell. The world beheld with astonishment deeds of horror that had no parallel in history committed by the gay and polite Frenchmen, and a nation boasting of the highest civilization transformed into incarnate devils; and all this was done under the plea now urged by our modern American radicals of "liberty, fraternity, and equality."

Look at our own land. The Puritans fled from religious persecution and sought these shores that they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. They landed on the rock-bound shores of New England and there erected their altars; they multiplied and held the sword of civil power, and they sheathed that sword in the bosoms of those who worshiped God in a different creed; they fined, imprisoned, banished, tortured and executed the inoffensive Quaker for daring to worship God according to the dictates of *his* conscience; and continued their persecuting, bloody work until it was suspended by an order of the King. The Massachusetts radical, foiled by the order of the crown, but still thirsting for human blood, commenced and continued a persecution of old men as wizards and of old women as witches until no one felt safe. A single mistake in the recital of the Lord's

Prayer was sufficient to consign a man or woman to imprisonment, trial, and death; and not until the radical began to fear that he might fall a victim to his own accursed devices did reason resume her empire, and the people saw with grief that they had been used as the bloody tools and executioners of radical fanatics; and all this was done and sustained and defended as the cause of "right and justice," and in the name of the Lord of Hosts.

Look at radicalism within the memory and knowledge of every member of this House. Who has not for years previous to the rebellion seen and heard sectional hate inculcated at the public meetings of the people, in the pulpit, the press, the rostrum, the school-book, and in the Senate and House of Representatives, by radicals, North and South? Who has not heard the Constitution of his country denounced as "a covenant with death and a league with hell?" Who has not heard of the applause with which Wendell Phillips was greeted by radical assemblages while he denounced undying hostility to the Union? Who has not heard of radical petitions presented to the Senate praying for a dissolution of the Union? Who has not heard of "the Helper Book," written by radicals, indorsed by sixty members of Congress, and scattered by thousands as a campaign document throughout the length and breadth of the land; a book intended to inculcate sectional hatred, stir up civil war in the South, and dissolve the Union? And, lastly, who does not know that radicalism, to promote the interest of southern traitors, pointed the pistol and nerved the arm of the assassin against the life of the lamented Lincoln?

Ah, Mr. Speaker, if the ballot is dangerous in the hands of the radical of the South, overthrown and repentant as he is, is it not doubly dangerous in the hands of the radical of the North, buoyant and unrepentant? Yet I would not, if I could, deprive him of it. Bad as the result of his teachings might be, it would be preferable, rather than to crush the freedom

of speech and the press, for that would end in despotism. While, therefore, radicalism is the greatest and most dangerous foe to our institutions—for the mission of radicalism is, ever has been, and always will be, to destroy, never to conserve—I would combat it with the weapons of truth. I would enlist the patriot, the Christian, the pulpit, and the press to expose and render it odious to the people, until it should sink, as its predecessors in history have sunk, beneath the scathing reprobation of honest men.

2. They tell us that the white man of the South shall not have the ballot unless his vote can be neutralized by the ballot of the black man, or, in other words, that the votes of disloyal men may be neutralized or controlled by the votes of loyal men. By what right do members assume that the southern men are disloyal *now*? The southron fought for an idea, that his paramount allegiance was due to the State; an idea in the truth of which he was educated, and in support of which he appealed to the fearful hazard of the sword. The decision was against him. He acknowledges his error; he abandons his theory. He is willing to accept our understanding of the allegiance due from the citizen; that the allegiance to the General Government is paramount, and is willing to seal it with an oath. What more have we ever required of any citizen? What more can we require? Will gentlemen pretend that they have an eye of Omniscience to scan the secret recesses of the human heart and read the thoughts of their fellow-man?

By what right do members assume that black men of the South were loyal to the Union? Sir, the evidence is overwhelming that they were loyal to their masters; we were told during the war that without them the rebellion would collapse, and this was urged as a reason to proclaim emancipation. That proclamation encouraged the effort of the slave for freedom, and forbid any attempt of any one in the service of the United States to prevent that effort: yet three millions of slaves made no effort. I

believe during that long war, when large districts of country could at any time be devastated by the slaves, outnumbering as they did the whites in many places two to one, there was not a single servile insurrection. That was a time when we should have supposed that the slaves would have struck for freedom. I do not denounce the black man for this; I honor the amiability of his nature, the Christian forbearance which prevented him from imbruing his hands in the blood of the white man, although urged to do it by northern radicals; to that amiability and forbearance the white man intrusted his property, his wife, his children, all he had dear on earth, and he was not disappointed; confidence was met by confidence; and this magnanimity of the black man will make the white man of the South his fast friend forever; this magnanimity of the black man in the hour of the white man's peril will do more to make the white man of the South give him the rights of "a man and brother" than all the legislative theories and denunciations of radicalism.

The home of the black man and his posterity will be in the sunny South, side by side with the white man and his posterity, and the man who strives to excite animosity between them on account of race or color is an enemy to both. True patriotism, true philanthropy, will pour into the South the healing oil of love, not the bitter waters of strife.

But we are told that the Constitution guarantees "a republican form of government," and therefore everyman should have the right of suffrage "without distinction of race or color" as a condition-precedent to the admission of the southern States. Now, according to this theory of the radicals we have never had a republican form of government, and "the great Republic" of which we boasted is a delusion and a lie. I have always been taught that some degree of intelligence as well as virtue is necessary in the elector under a republican Government, but the radicals have told us for years that the body and soul of the black man

have been imbruted by slavery, that education was prohibited to the black by southern laws, and he had intelligence very little beyond the brute creation. Horace Greeley, in his *Tribune* of June 2, says that "dissimulation and treachery are the natural vices of slaves," and we heard from the lips of a prominent member of the dominant party on this floor very recently, [Mr. DONNELLY,] while he eloquently, and, I think, with great ingenuity of argument, urged a national Department of Education. that—

"We cannot make bricks without straw; we cannot build a republic without intelligence; we have found ignorance and rebellion everywhere associated together as parent and child. If popular ignorance has plunged Mexico into poverty, anarchy, and ruin, what shall it do for the United States? Can the same cause yield one result west of the boundary line of Mexico and an entirely different set of results east of that line?" \* \* \* \* "then let us eliminate that which is more dangerous than slavery, ignorance."

Yet with the knowledge of all this, that we cannot build a republic without intelligence, the radical would put the ballot in the hands of millions imbruted by slavery, with intelligence but little beyond the brute creation, possessing the vices of treachery and dissimulation, and by so doing give them the political power, in some States the actual numerical majority, in almost all, the balance of power, and yet profess that he does so "to guaranty a republican form of government."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with Horace Greeley, that "dissimulation and treachery are the natural vices of slaves." The slave was not treacherous to his master during the late rebellion. Not treachery, but faithfulness, is a characteristic of the African race. I do not agree with my honorable friend [Mr. DONNELLY] that "popular ignorance has plunged Mexico into poverty, anarchy, and ruin." I think if I had time I could convince him that the admission to citizenship at the Revolution, without "distinction of race or color," and the miscegenation of the Castilian, the African, and the Indian has been the foundation of her "poverty, anarchy, and ruin." And I think I could con-

vince my honorable friend [Mr. DONNELLY] that there may be something in a republic more dangerous than either slavery or ignorance; that is, educated intellect without the education of the heart. The educated intellect of a vicious man only makes him potent for evil. Educated intellect made France of the last century a nation of infidels; educated intellect told the people that there was no God but reason, and they bowed down to the incarnation of reason in the person of a naked prostitute. Educated intellect paved the way for a reign of terror and blood. But I do agree with him that a republic could not be built or exist without intelligence; and while I would not object to the ignorance of the few, as not dangerous to free institutions, I would object to the ignorance of the many.

I have no prejudices against the black man; I never had. I have always found him obliging, polite, friendly, of an amiable disposition, and with the simplicity of a "grown-up child." I would rejoice to see him an intelligent free-man. He now has the power, under God, to work out his own destiny. He is, when educated, capable of self-government. But with these views, I would be false to my constituents and false to the Republic to give the control of entire States to masses of ignorant men, black or white.

3. But we are urged to pass the several bills submitted to this Congress disfranchising the white man of the South and putting him under political control of the black man as "a punishment."

Honorable gentlemen on this floor have advocated these bills on this ground almost entirely. Sir, I deny the power of Congress to pass any law for the punishment of treason or any other crime heretofore committed by southern men. The Constitution which gave Congress its powers, and which we have all sworn to support, says, in language impossible to be misunderstood, that—

"No bill of attainder or *ex post facto* law shall be passed."

By what authority, then, do members on this

floor urge the passage of *ex post facto* laws as a punishment for crimes? By what authority do members on this floor introduce bills which are in spirit and effect bills of attainder in their most odious forms?

"Bills of attainder are such special acts of the Legislature as inflict capital punishment upon persons supposed to be guilty of high offenses, such as treason or felony, without any conviction in the ordinary course of judicial proceedings. If an act inflicts a milder punishment than death it is then called a bill of pains and penalties.

"The punishment has often been inflicted without calling upon the party to answer, or without even the formality of proof, and sometimes because the law in its ordinary course of proceeding would acquit the offender. The injustice and iniquity of such acts in general constitute an irresistible argument against the existence of the power. In a free government it would be intolerable; and in the hands of the reigning faction it might and probably would be abused to the ruin and death of the most virtuous citizens. Bills of this sort have been most usually passed in England in times of rebellion or of gross subserviency to the Crown or of violent political excitements, periods in which all nations are most liable—as well the free as the enslaved, to forget their duties and to trample upon the rights and liberties of others."—*3 Story on the Constitution*.

And yet members in contravention of these constitutional safeguards of the liberties of the citizen, advocate bills in which the Congress, as a judicial tribunal, disfranchises citizens as a punishment for crimes heretofore committed, and not even restricting this judicial act to cases of individuals by *name*, as in England, but to large classes of the people without designating *names*.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the proceedings of no Congress that ever assembled under the Constitution have been watched with more intense interest by the people; every one felt when this Congress assembled that its proceedings would be for weal or for woe to the unborn millions who will live and die under our national flag. The States, the people felt that it would be a struggle between a written Constitution, guaranteeing the rights of the States and guarding the rights of the citizen, on the one hand, and the centralization of despotic power in the General Government on the other hand. It had been announced by the principal organ of the

radicals that this Government would be reconstructed under "the form of a republic but with the strength of a monarchy." No wonder that our proceedings should excite intense interest, for no more momentous subject could engage the thoughts or enlist the interest of a free people.

Mr. Speaker, no man will deny that this conflict has commenced. Sir, it will be "an irrepressible conflict" until centralization is trampled into the dust under the indignant heel of a free people determined to maintain the compacts of the Constitution, or until the States, shorn of their strength, are yoked to the car of Federal power, and then a Constitution would be a mockery.

The people of the United States have never indicated their desire for a change of the organic law by a reconstruction of the States. Sir, this Congress was not elected upon such an issue, and when, knowing this, I see a majority of this House voting in favor of propositions to change the fundamental law upon subjects always held sacred by the people; when I see these changes of the fundamental law submitted to Legislatures elected without reference to such changes, I tremble for my country. I feel if I could by so doing change the purposes of a majority of this House to centralize power, I would do what I never would do to mortal man, except for my God and for my country. I would kneel as a humble suppliant to my colleagues and pray them, for the sake of God, for the sake of a generous, confiding people, to pause until that people could be heard; that they would attach to every bill of amendment a requisition that it shall be ratified by conventions instead of Legislatures. Sir, as it now is, a Congress elected without reference to amendment of the Constitution may propose amendments, and these amendments may be ratified by Legislatures elected entirely on other issues; thus the fundamental law may be changed, not only without the knowledge, but against the will of a vast majority of the people. It will be according to

the forms of the Constitution, but in violation of its very spirit and essence.

Sir, that this bold attempt to override the rights of the people is contemplated by the champions of arbitrary power, and will be made, I have the proof. I read the following notice, published in the public presses:

"PENNSYLVANIA.—Governor Curtin has taken upon himself the duty of sending letters to the 'Governors of all the loyal States,' urging them to convene the Legislatures of their respective States, in order to take action on the proposed constitutional amendment which has lately been submitted to the country by Congress. The Governor of Massachusetts is reported as eager to respond, and is ready to call an extra session of the Legislature any Saturday afternoon."

No doubt, sir, every loyal radical Governor is "eager to respond," while at the same time he will prate about the duty of Congress to "guaranty a republican form of government."

From the number and character of the bills introduced as amendments of the Constitution, some members seem to think that two thirds of the Congress and three fourths of the States have omnipotent power to change the fundamental law in all its parts. Sir, I deny that power. There are reserved rights of the people that were never surrendered, even under the power of amendment; among these may be enumerated the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience—it is the inalienable right of every citizen now and forever—and to this may be added the right of suffrage. No State that ratified the Constitution ever contemplated a grant of power under an amendment of the Constitution, to pass bills of attainder, *ex post facto* laws, to impose a tax or duty on articles exported from any State, or to establish a monarchy. Sir, if the Constitution when submitted to the States had contained a provision authorizing two thirds of Congress and three fourths of the States to so amend as to deprive a citizen of the right to worship God, or to take away the right of suffrage, or to pass bills of attainder and *ex post facto* laws, or to impose a tax on the exports of a State, or to establish

a monarchy, does any sane man believe for a moment that it would have been ratified by a single State of "the Old Thirteen." Sir, our fathers felt as we should feel, that there are reserved rights which are inalienable; that constitutions bind posterity, and that we have no right to bind posterity in the chains of arbitrary power. Yet, sir, we have a bill pending for some time giving authority to Congress, by an amendment of the Constitution, to authorize the levy of a tax or duty on cotton, an amendment which, if passed, would repeal that section of the Constitution which was intended by our fathers to protect commerce and to prevent sectional legislation by the passage of acts which might injure or destroy the staple productions of a State in order to promote the interests of another State, a power which would array the cupidity of one class of our citizens against the interests of another class, the cupidity of the manufacturer against the producer, the commercial against the agricultural interests, and *vice versa*, to end in discontent, rebellion, or revolution.

Yet we have heard on this floor, in colloquial debate, from the lips of a member of the dominant party, a gentleman who, in cultivated intellect, respectability, and eloquence, ranks as high as any other member, the right of two thirds of Congress and three fourths of the States to establish a monarchy, under the plea that when the people were ready to make such a change they would be so demoralized that a republican government would not be worth contending for. Representatives of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, are you prepared to sanction this doctrine? Are you willing to admit such a latitudinarian construction of the Constitution that your constituents could have the fetters of a monarchy riveted on their necks whenever three fourths of the States become so demoralized as to require it by an amendment to the Constitution? Are the rights of your constituents to be governed by the demoralization of others? Is that a condition in the compact.

either express or implied? Would your constituents submit to the wrong, or would they assert their inalienable rights by revolution? Yet we have heard the right of Congress asserted in bills and by members in debate to regulate suffrage. You know that the power to give includes the power to take away—a power to disfranchise the people at the arbitrary will of a majority of Congress. Who can doubt that the power would be exercised in times of high political excitement? Are you prepared to give this sacred right of your constituents—the right of ballot—to the control and keeping of a majority of Congress?

Mr. Speaker, I have been pained to hear the passage of bills urged in this House by an appeal to the prejudices of party and the revengeful feelings engendered by the heat of the late conflict of arms. Legislation induced by passion should never be the legislation of a free people in a free republic. We legislate and propose amendments to the fundamental law, not for a year or a century of years, but for all coming time. We seem to forget that when we legislate against the South or for party we legislate for our own posterity. Suppose we should succeed in giving an ascendancy to party or in crippling the South in her resources; what is the life of a man or a party when compared with the life of an empire? Parties are ephemeral. The places that now know the men of the South, the actors in the late conflict, in a few years "will know them no more forever," but the Republic should and will (if sustained by wise legislation) endure forever. God grant that it may stand impregnable, in the future as in the past, against the assaults of traitors within and foes without.

It is folly to make an organic law giving the power to promote the interest of one section at the expense of another section, however the interest of one section may be identified with the interest of another section now. That identity of interest will not continue. With the settlement of our vast Territories and the development of their vast resources, new com-



binations of interest and power will be formed. The God of nature has identified the interests of the West with the South, and the men of the West in the future will be the political allies of the men of the South, whether the men of the South are white or black.

I need not say that every addition to the powers of the Federal Government, either by an amendment of the Constitution or by unconstitutional construction, is by subtraction from the powers of the States, and destroys the equilibrium of powers intended to check despotism, and would leave the dearest rights of the States and the people at the mercy of a majority of Congress, which in a country of such vast extent as ours, with such diversified productions, would inevitably result in sectional parties, sectional legislation, and hatred of the Union.

I need not say that constitutions are made for minorities not for majorities. I need not say with what fearful speed we are gravitating to centralization of power. Witness the taxation of State banks out of existence; the passage of bills by this House in relation to railroads; the power assumed over the right of suffrage; the attempt to destroy the independence of the State judiciary under the penalty of fine and imprisonment; the interference with and virtual repeal of State laws; the power given to swarms of officers (including the officers of the Freedmen's Bureau) to arrest and imprison the citizens of every State; but above all the conversion of the United States into a great eleemosynary corporation by the passage of the "act to enlarge the power of the Freedmen's Bureau," districting the United States, with the establishment of military authority over each district containing freedmen or refugees; an agent in each county armed with military power, and authorized to supersede the civil power by trial and condemnation of citizens under the rules of the War Department, prescribed by the President, without trial by jury; the establishment of poor-houses; the erection of school-houses, and the support of

millions of paupers at the expense of the people. And this bill, which conferred imperial power on the President, and laid the personal liberties of the people and the independence of the State judiciary at the feet of military power, the greatest stride to centralization ever dreamed or attempted under our Constitution, was only prevented from becoming a law by the firmness of Andrew Johnson. For this act the name of Andrew Johnson will live in the heart of every friend of popular rights as a champion and defender of the rights of the States and liberties of the people in their hour of peril until the Republic shall cease to exist.

The plan of reconstruction, embracing the refusal to permit eleven States to be represented in Congress, is a grand scheme to perfect centralization. This plan of reconstruction punishes the innocent as well as the guilty in the southern States, the loyalist as well as the traitor. Tennessee, who broke the chains of secession and stood in the ranks of the loyal States, with loyal representatives, is placed in the same category with South Carolina, and the powers of the loyal States are also to be curtailed under this plan of reconstruction. Who, sir, ever believed that the secession of traitors would reconstruct our Government? Why, sir, Jefferson Davis, in the height of his success, never dreamed that success would result in a reconstruction of our Government, much less that his defeat would effect that result. Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that this effort to reconstruct should be urged upon us. Many men have long waited for some fortunate chance to occur that might enable them to reconstruct our institutions. The great "Head Center" of the dominant party in this House, [Mr. STEVENS,] with a candor that does him honor, recently said:

"In my youth, in my manhood, and in my old age, I have fondly dreamed that when any fortunate chance should have broken up the foundations of our institutions and released us from obligations the most tyrannical that ever man imposed in the name of freedom."

But thousands have prayed with more fer-

veny than my venerable friend ever dreamed, that this fortunate chance should never occur.

Sir, the people neither demand reconstruction nor centralization. They want restoration. The industry and business of the country demand immediate restoration. Thousands of farmers, mechanics, and capitalists are waiting to go South. Their industry and enterprise would in a few years make that fair and fruitful land, now desolated by war, to "bud and blossom as the rose," but they will not settle in a "conquered province," governed by military force.

The financial interests of the country, the tax-payers burdened with the largest national debt upon earth, demand that their burdens should be lightened by an immediate restoration of the States, the industry, and productions of the South.

The friends of constitutional freedom demand immediate restoration as a measure vital to the preservation of the Constitution and perpetuity of the Union. The Christian—not the radical priest who preaches political "hatred and malice and all uncharitableness," who sees that God is only a God of justice—not him, but the Christian who believes that God is a "God of love," ministers of the meek and lowly Jesus, who taught His disciples to pray "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," demand it.

Sir, the law of love and friendship is the only law that can bind this Union in enduring bonds. Sectionalism and sectional hate sooner or later will rend it asunder. The policy of statesmen should be conciliation, not vengeance. I feel no hatred in my bosom toward the secession traitors of the South, or their allies the sectional radical fanatics of the North, although I believe, as much as I believe in my own existence, that they alike are responsible for the blood of our sons. I would restore the Union of my country in forgiveness and mutual confidence. I would rest the foundations of the Union on respect and love.

It is marvelous to me that statesmen cannot

see that sectional denunciation and sectional laws can never cement the Union of the States, can never command or inspire the respect of nationalities. Look at Ireland; centuries of sectional oppression have not turned the spirit of her sons or caused them to love their "union" with Great Britain. She was first "a conquered province," then England by bribery and compulsion established "the Union." a Union commenced in perfidy, and which has been used by the British Parliament to restrict her commerce, to load her with taxes, and the result of which has been to drive thousands of her sons to seek liberty and a home under the flag of "this great Republic." Has sectional legislation, has the rule of force instead of conciliation, made the Celt love the Saxon and "the Union?" No! the wrongs of the Irishman have been transmitted from sire to son with undying hate, and at this very hour one hundred thousand Irishmen now on our soil stand ready to avenge their wrongs and to give liberty to their fatherland. This hereditary feeling of the Irish was most eloquently expressed by President Roberts in an address to the Fenians, as follows:

"The concentrated wrongs of centuries are in our hearts, and give strength to the perpetual longing for Irish freedom which neither time nor obstacles can quench."

Mr. Speaker, Ireland will yet be free, for—

"Freedom's battle once begun,  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft is ever won."

And where is the friend of human freedom in this land that would not rejoice to see the Irishman break his shackles and Ireland stand a disenthralled nation in the family of nations? Yes, sir, Ireland will yet be free; "the green flag" will again float over that beautiful isle, and then, and not until then, will the "epitaph of Emmett be written" on bronze and marble, as it is now written in every true Irish heart.

The soldiers who fought for the restoration of the Union, who gave their blood to restore the supremacy of the Constitution and the laws, will demand that the Union conquered by their

arms shall be restored. It will be folly to tell them that they fought in vain; that they fought to dissolve, not restore, the Union. If this Congress fails to restore the Union of the States (and Congress is the only obstacle to that restoration) they will say that radical ideas have done what the armies of traitors in the field could not do—prevented the restoration of the Union. No glittering generalities like the glittering veil of the false prophet of Khorassan can deceive them. You may talk to them and repeat the stereotyped phrases about “the right,” “humanity,” “indemnity for the past and security for the future,” “brotherhood of man,” “hands dripping with human gore,” &c., and you may frame bills with titles proposing to facilitate the restoration of the Union, while they in effect postpone it, but they will tell you that they fought for immediate restoration, not for postponement.

The Democratic party demands to a man the restoration of the Union. That grand old party who always maintained the faith of compacts, who always stood as faithful sentinels on the ramparts of the Constitution, who never in legislation knew any East or West or North or South, who from the time the foundations of the Constitution were laid warned the people against sectional fanatics, and repeated the warning until they were scoffed at as “Union savers;” that old party by whose policy, under God, this Republic marched steadily onward to a position of power and resources that has placed her in the van of nations, a party without whose united aid in men and money during a rebellion inaugurated by sectional parties the Union would have been swept like chaff before the whirlwind, that grand old party demands immediate restoration, not reconstruction.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no evasion now of the great issues to be tried before the tribunal of the people, union or disunion? the constitutional rights of the States or centralization of power in the General Government?

Sir, if the southern States are out of the

Union, then is our flag, intended as the emblem of the union of the States and power of this great Republic, in truth what a radical once proclaimed it, “a flaunting lie,” and you should tear eleven stars from its glorious constellation.

Mr. Speaker, let this agitation cease, now and forever. Let us heal the wounds of our bleeding country. Let us restore the Union before we adjourn. It can be done in an hour. Let us do it, and the patriotic shouts of the people will greet our return to our constituents, and an impetus will be given to industry and enterprise which in its results will astonish the world.

Let us repudiate all hatred, all sectionalism, in our speeches or legislative acts. Let us act on the principle of “malice toward none, with charity for all,” and we will bind the Union in bands of iron.

Let us lighten the burdens of the sons of toil by lifting the taxes from the necessities of life; but above all, let us inaugurate the system of “eight hours a day” for the laborer and mechanic in the employ of the Government. It would pioneer the way to a general introduction of the system into all the departments of industry. Let us give the laborer and mechanic time to cultivate his intellect, to study the Constitution of his country, to commune with his family and teach his children, to worship God, to relax his nerves. Ah! who can tell, as has been eloquently expressed in song by the gifted and respected wife of a laborer in the city of Trenton:

“Who can tell what harps are hushed  
By the roar of forgo and wheel;  
Or what mighty minds are crushed  
’Neath oppression’s iron heel?”

“Masters! count the gain, the cost,  
Labor pays from every pore,  
By the grand inventions lost,  
Shrouded stars and buried ore.  
Brothers, cast your bonds away,  
Give the word, ‘eight hours a day.’”

Let us remember that the stability of the Republic under God depends on the working men. They compose our armies; they man our navies; they pour out their blood in our defense; they are never defiled with political

corruption. I solemnly believe that if the liberties of this country are ever destroyed by foreign force or domestic treason that the last hand that will uphold the last standard of freedom will be the hand of the working man, and in his bosom liberty will find her last resting-place. Let us do this, and we will bind the heart of the working man to his country and its institutions with ties that cannot be severed by human influence or human power.

Let us double the pension of the soldier who was maimed or disabled in the service of the Republic; give him at least enough to supply his necessary wants through life. Do not let us calculate his services by dollars and cents, or the increase of the national debt. He was the means of saving to the country the richest territory on earth, which, without his services, would have been lost to the Republic. Do not let him wander through the nation, whose life he was the means of preserving, in a condition but little above the condition of a pauper. And let us show to the living that we appreciate his services by doing our duty to the memory of the dead. Alas! we cannot give our thanks to the gallant dead. Three hundred thousand torn by shot or shell or bayonet, or destroyed by disease, "sleep the sleep that knows no waking" at Arlington, Andersonville, Gettysburg, and on the soil of a hundred battle-fields.

"The muffled drum's sad roll has beat  
The soldier's last tattoo;  
No more on life's parade shall meet  
The brave and fallen foe.  
On Fame's eternal camping-ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
And glory guards with solemn round  
The bivouac of the dead."

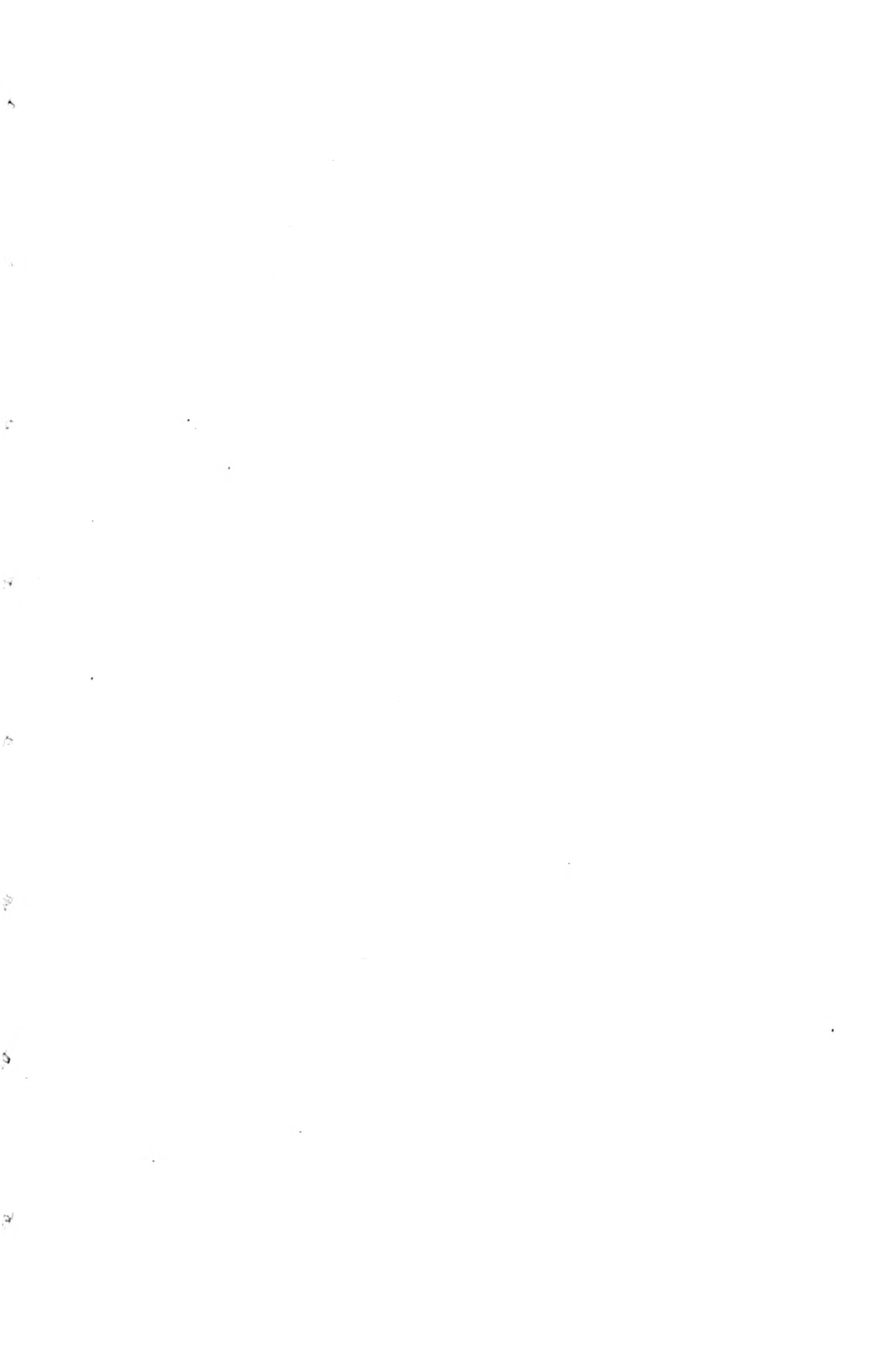
They cannot receive our gratitude, but let us do what we can to honor their memory; let us double or treble the pension of his wife, made a widow, and his children, made fatherless, by his devotion to the Union.

Let us do this, and we shall never want for soldiers who will spring to arms against foreign invaders or domestic traitors. Let us avoid the exercise of all doubtful power. Let us maintain the supremacy of the civil over the military power. Let us maintain the independence of the judiciary; the freedom of speech; the freedom of the press; the right of trial by jury, as rights inestimable to the people "and formidable to tyrants only." Let us foster and promote public virtue. Let us establish a commission before which the loyal and innocent victim of the arbitrary power exercised during the rebellion may prove his loyalty and innocence, and thus save his name from the brand of treason and his children from the humiliation of being pointed out by the finger of scorn as the offspring of a traitor. Let there be provided a redress for every wrong committed within the limits of the Republic; then our laws will be revered, and the proudest title that a man on earth can boast, will be, "I am an American citizen."

Let us do this, and the Republic will be perpetual; then we can look with an eye of faith through coming ages and see our people the most prosperous on earth; united under one God, one Constitution, one destiny, and our beloved Republic, standing immutable in her strength then as she now is, "the asylum of the oppressed, the home of freemen."

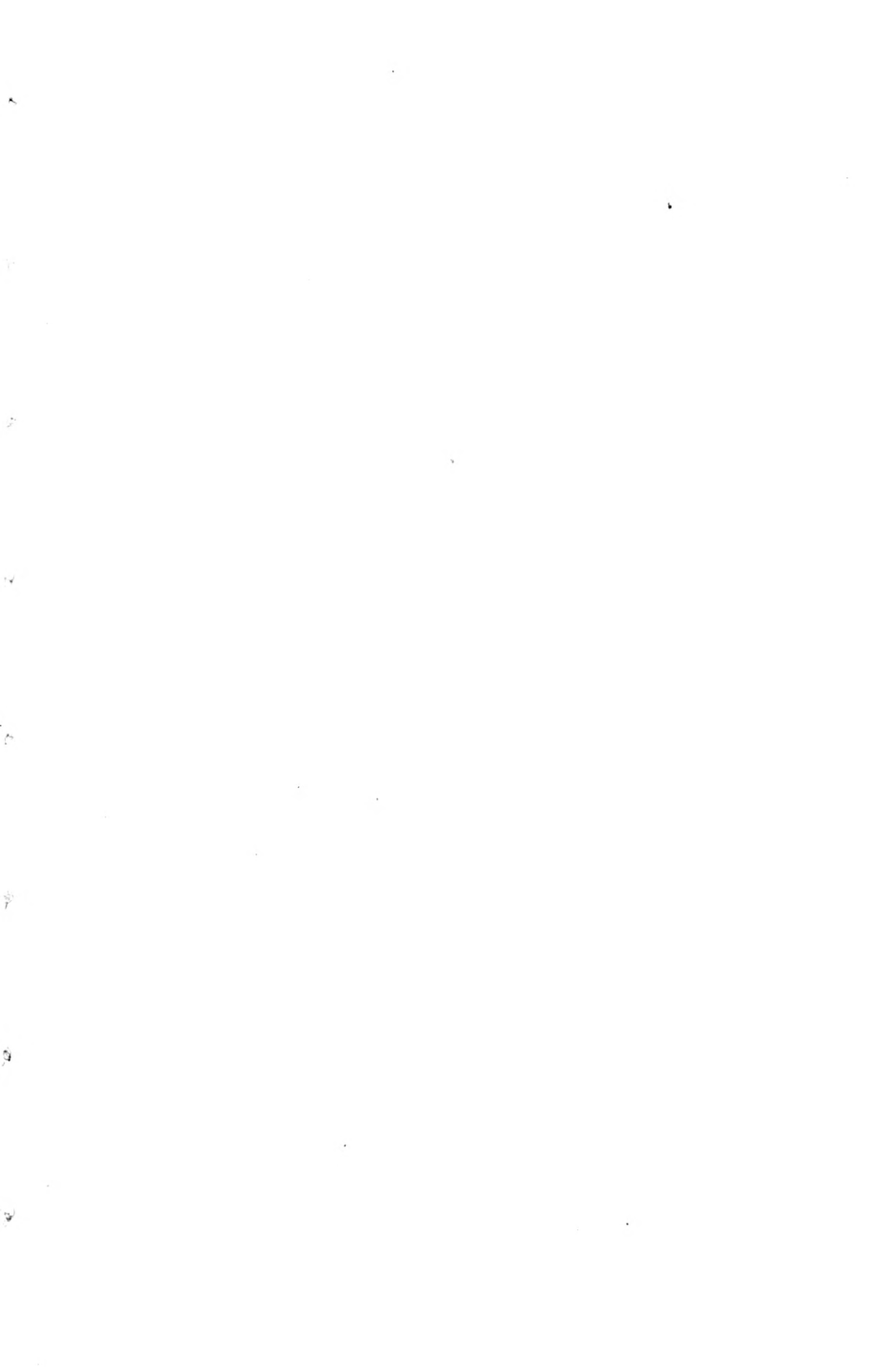








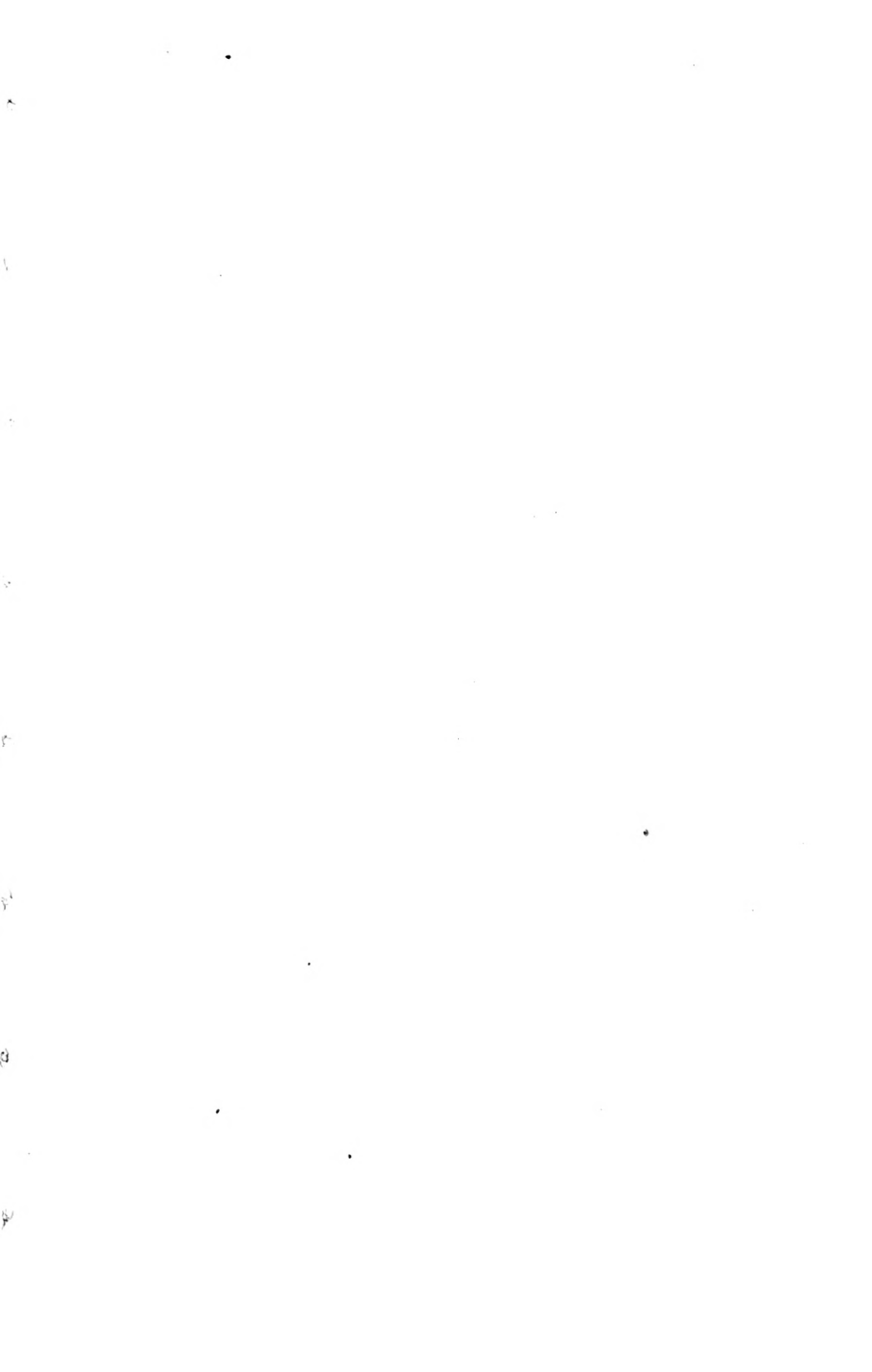










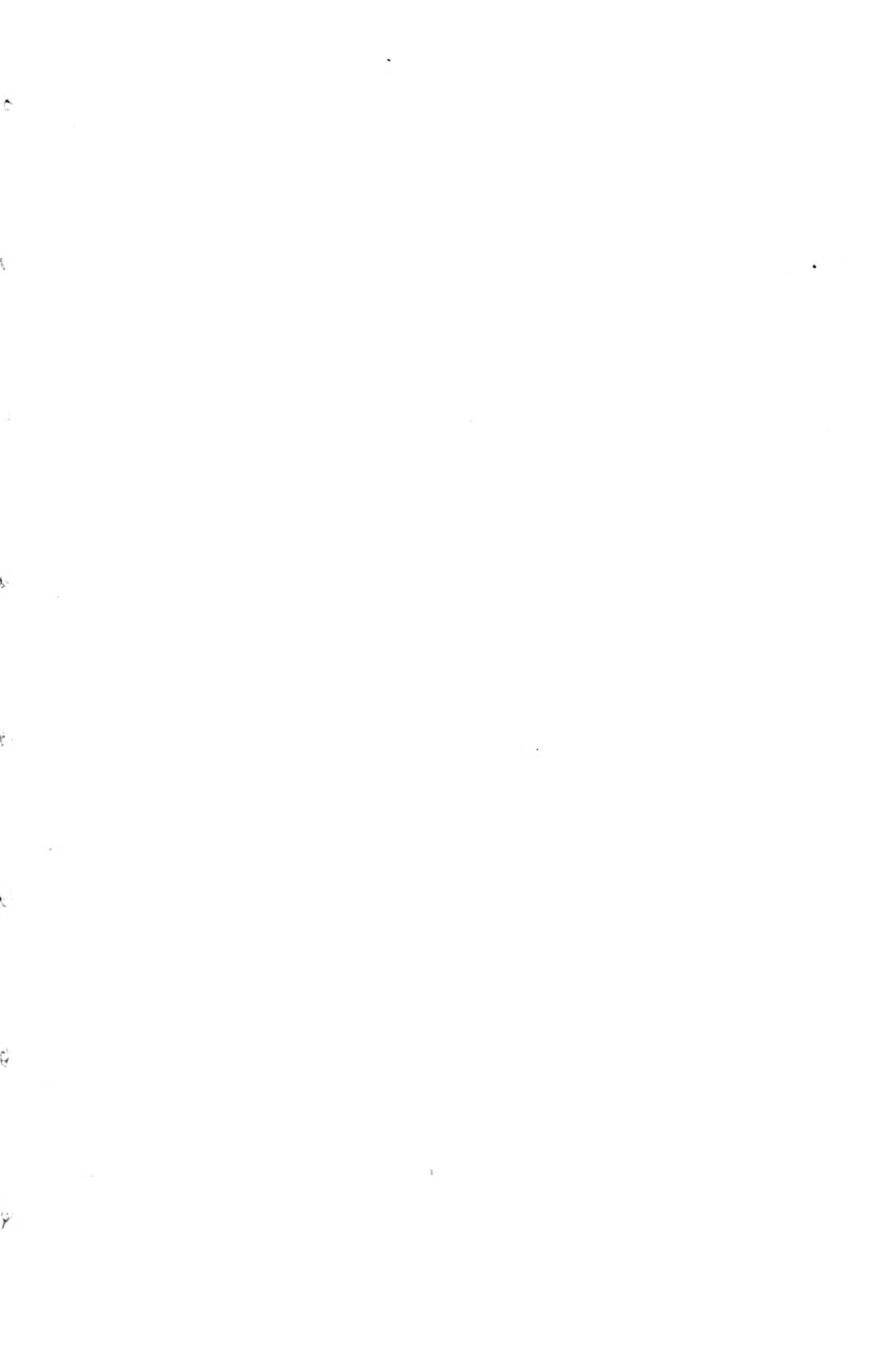




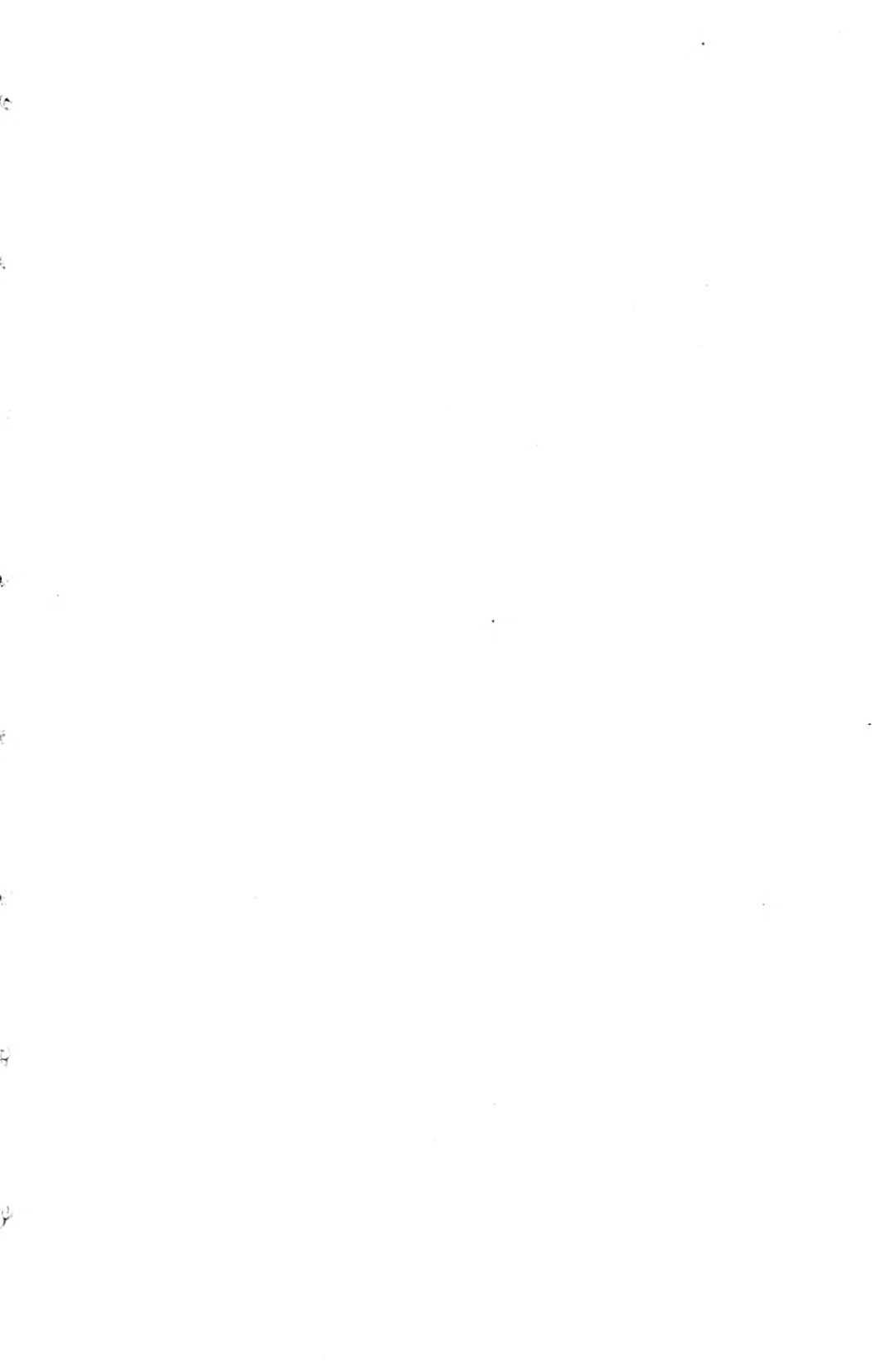














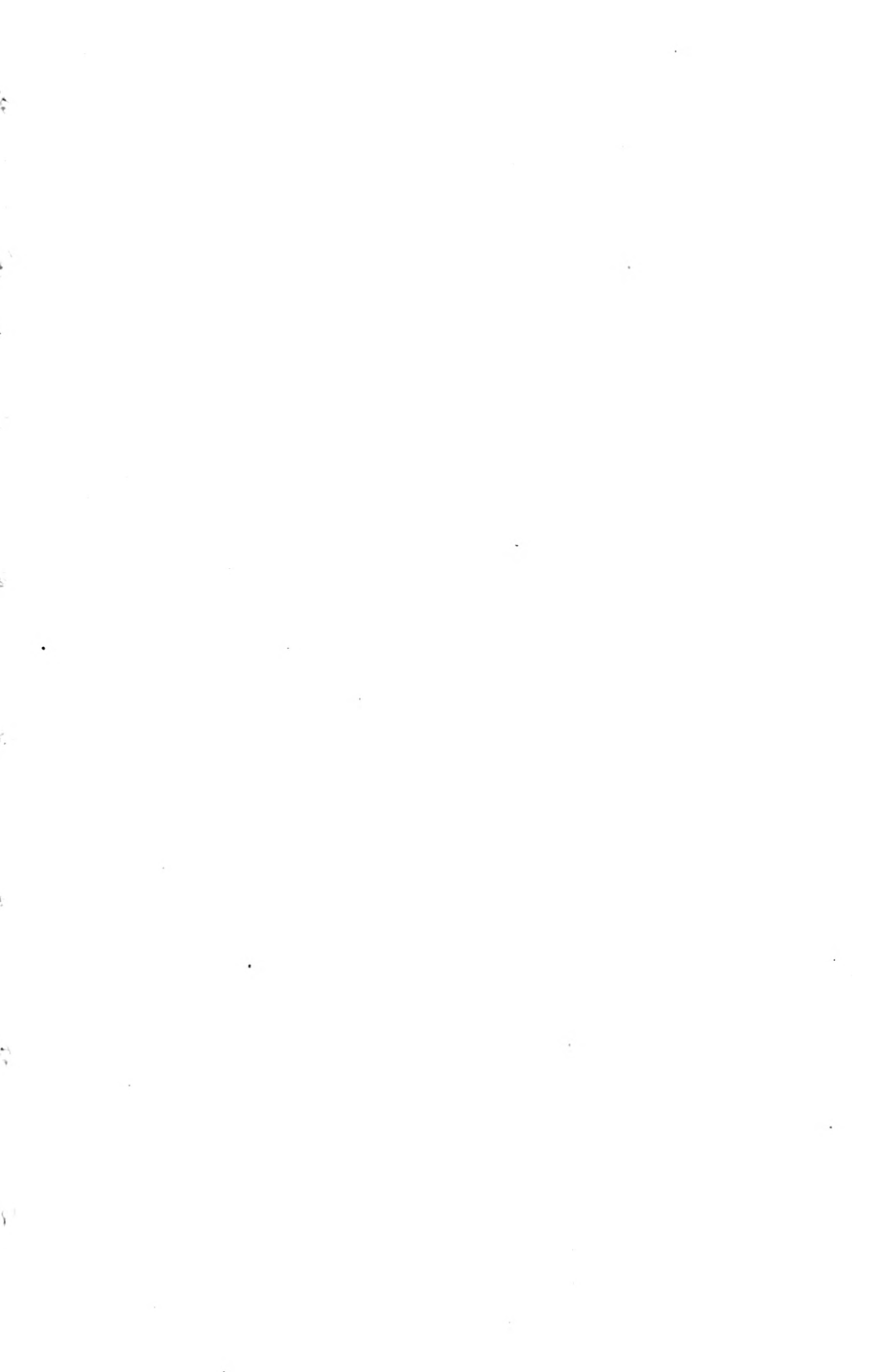










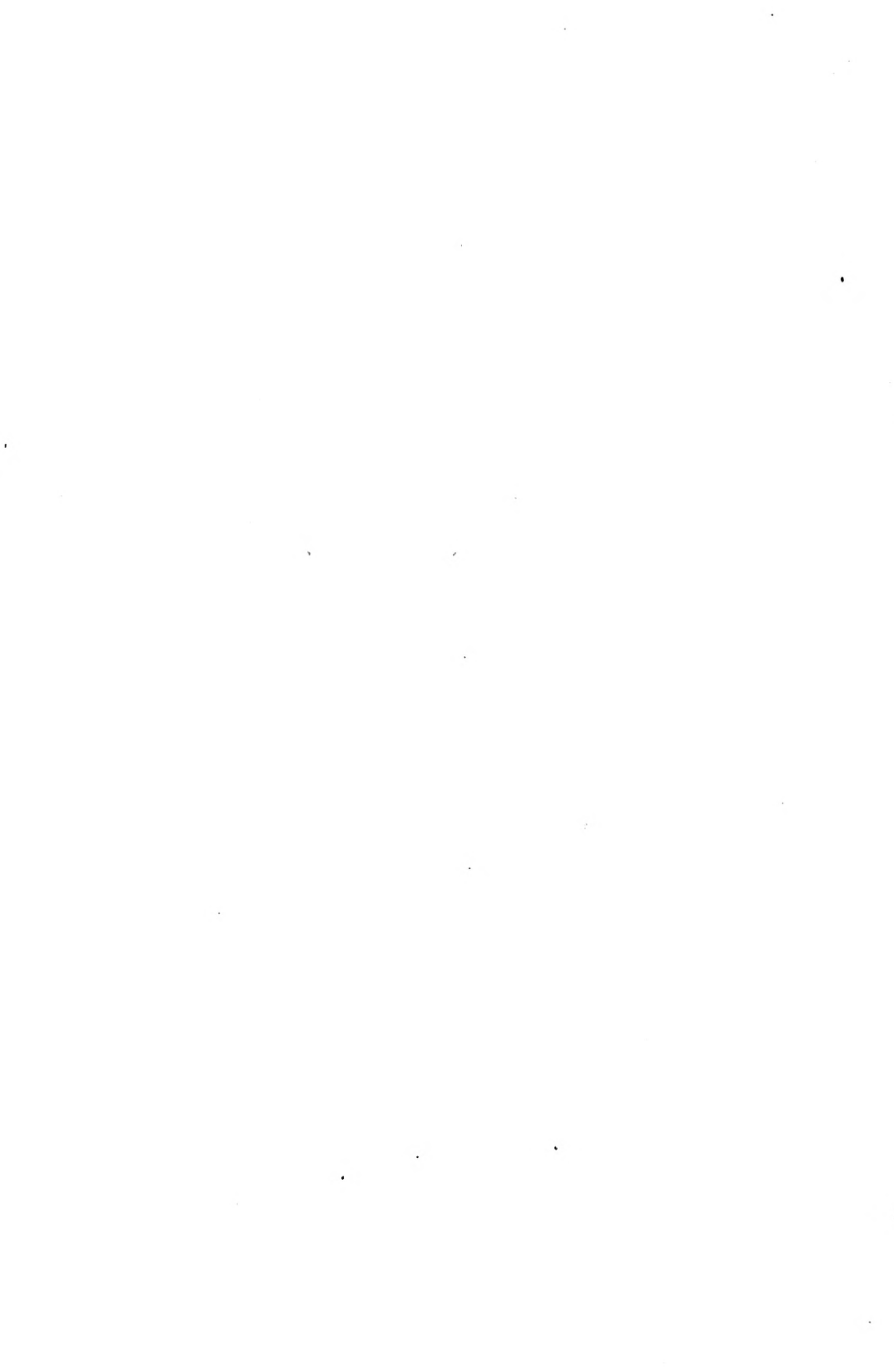


























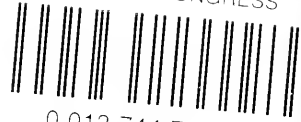






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